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Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr Thomas **Schlesinger** (Austria)

Addendum

Programme questions

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 15. Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

1. At its 16th and 17th meetings, on 15 June 1998, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It had before it the proposals in respect of programme 15, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific.

2. The representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific introduced programme 15 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support for the proposed revisions was expressed. It was considered that the proposed revisions were formulated in conformity with the conference structure mandated by the Commission in its resolution 53/1 of 30 April 1997 and took into account global and regional developments, such as the current financial crisis. The decision to revise the programme structure by streamlining the existing subprogrammes from 10 to 7 in order to increase efficiency and optimize use of resources and, at the same time, to reflect activities to assist least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and countries with economies in transition in all the subprogrammes was welcomed. The general principles underlying

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regional cooperation, as well as the three themes of economic cooperation, sustainable development and poverty alleviation, were endorsed.

4. The view was expressed that the proposed revisions had expanded the objectives of ESCAP and did not reflect the Commission's recent mandate for priority setting. It was considered that the narrative of paragraphs 15.5 and 15.6 should have clearly indicated the relationship between the Committees and the subprogrammes.

5. The view was expressed that the activities of ESCAP related to landlocked countries should take into account the problems and needs of transit countries. Therefore it was expressed that in order to improve their transit infrastructure at the regional, subregional and interregional levels, financial and technical assistance should be provided to them. Another view was expressed, and attention was drawn to the mandates contained in General Assembly resolution 52/19 of 21 November 1997 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization".

6. The integration of the gender perspective in all areas of work, in compliance with the directives of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, was welcomed. However, the view was expressed that a specific objective on gender mainstreaming should have been included in subprogramme 15.3, Social development.

7. The view was also expressed that there should have been an explicit reference in paragraph 15.4 to coordination with the United Nations funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions.

8. The mandate for paragraph 15.9 (f) was questioned. The Committee was informed that this paragraph reflected the result of the objectives described in paragraphs 15.14 (c) and (d) of the proposed revisions.

9. Concern was expressed that the merger into one of the two subprogrammes "Regional economic cooperation: trade and investment" and "Regional economic cooperation: industry and technology" should not undermine the importance of technology transfer to developing countries.

10. It was noted that the words "the region's dynamic growth" in the last sentence of paragraph 15.10, were no longer accurate in view of the current economic crisis in the region. It was also emphasized that the recent financial crisis should be given priority attention in subprogramme 15.2, Development research and policy analysis.

11. Paragraph 15.12 was welcomed, in particular as regards the sharing of experiences among member countries of the region.

12. The view was expressed that the text in paragraphs 15.8 and 15.12 to 15.15 should be modified so as to reflect more accurately the recent mandates adopted by the Commission.

Conclusions and recommendations

13. The Committee recommended approval of the revisions to programme 15 of the medium-term plan, subject to the following modification:

Paragraph 15.15 (d)

***Insert* and cooperation *after* partnership**